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IN CASE OF DEATH

BY A. B.

To the young graduate who is just starting out to do private duty, these suggestions may be of value.

When a nurse is asked to remain after the death of her patient and is requested to do everything that is necessary, the first thing she must think of is the mouth, especially if artificial teeth were worn. Replace these as soon as possible, and hold the jaws until they are set. This may take an hour or more, but it is the best thing to do to make the mouth look most natural. Next bathe the body, put on a diaper and clean gown, do up the hair as worn during the patient's lifetime, if possible, change the bedclothing, air the room, and put it in perfect order. Do all this as quietly as possible.

When the undertaker arrives, he will be glad of your assistance. He will tell you when to dress the body. If the weather is cool he may finish the embalming at once, and you can then complete preparations for burial the same day, dressing the patient as the family desires. If you cannot do this until the next morning the body will be rigid and it will be more difficult to put on the garments, but as there is no hurry you will have patience, for on no account must a garment be torn. Be as gentle and conscientious in the care of the dead as you would be were the patient still alive and conscious of every touch.

Often the nurse is asked to stay until after the funeral; she will then help in the arrangement of it, and afterward help to put the house in order, everything in its usual place, removing as much as possible the signs of the presence of death.

What a comfort and help the nurse can be to the family at such a time! It is surely a privilege to be asked to perform the last duties this side of the grave and to have inspired the confidence of the bereft family.

